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RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS COTONOU 000252

PARIS FOR ARS (DWINTON)  
DEPARTMENT FOR AF/PD (ANYASO, TITUS, LISENBY), AF/W (ACOOK)

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [KPAO](#) [BN](#)  
SUBJECT: BENIN PREDEPARTURE ORIENTATION REPORT

**¶1.** DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: On June 4, 2009, the Public Affairs Section hosted a Pre-Departure Orientation for three Education and Exchange grantees: a Junior Staff Development Program (JSDP) grantee, Irene Mensah, Project Officer for the African Women Food Farmer Initiative (AWFFI) Program at the Project Hunger NGO; a "Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages" (TESOL) grantee, Igor Akpovo, a teacher at the University of Abomey Calavi; and, a Humphrey grantee, Cletus Adohinzin, a Research officer at the Population Council NGO.

**¶2.** DATE OF ACTIVITY: June 4, 2009; third quarter, FY 09.

**¶3.** PROGRAM JUSTIFICATION/OBJECTIVES: The Pre-Departure Orientation was a good opportunity to present the challenges they will be facing during their U.S. experience, and allow them to ask questions about their programs.

**¶4.** MPP UMBRELLA THEMES AND AUDIENCE REACHED: Subject program meets Post's objectives in Promoting Human Rights, Education and Mutual Understanding, and Investing in people.

**¶5.** ACTIVITIES/IMPACT/RESULT: PAO Rhonda Watson delivered a send-off message encouraging participants to take advantage of this opportunity to enhance their academic and professional development, and to return to Benin as a change agent. Cultural Affairs Assistant Taibatou Osseni delivered a PowerPoint presentation explaining what grantees should expect in the U.S. so that they would be prepared to face their new cultural and academic environment for the next two years. Four Fulbright and Humphrey alumni were invited to share their U.S. experience with the new grantees.

The Pre-Departure Orientation also served as an opportunity for the PAO to award certificates to a returned Fulbright Alumnus and two English teachers who had successfully completed the E-teacher online training in Business English and Teaching English to Young Learners.

After the formalities, the group enjoyed refreshments, jazz music and a discussion about tips for making the most of their experience in the U.S.

**¶6.** NON-USG SOURCES OF IN-COUNTRY FUNDING/IN KIND SUPPORT: None

**¶7.** QUALITY OF USG SUPPORT: Excellent. The Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs and the International Institute of Education did a great job by providing useful information and documentation to the new grantees.

RAWLINGS